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Learning to Live with Loneliness

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Avon Counselling Clinic
Christchurch Public Hospital
1973

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Learning to Live with Loneliness
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Chapter 1:
Am I Alone or is it Just Me?

'Alone' can be the most desolate word in any language.

Learning to live with loneliness involves acknowledging it as a normal human experience and then actively taking steps to manage it.

This book was written to help you to find healthy ways to manage loneliness in order for you to lead to a more fulfilling and connected life, even when experiencing periods of solitude.

Spending too much time alone can impact your mental health, particularly if it leads to feelings of isolation or loneliness. While solitude can be beneficial for reflection and relaxation, too much time without meaningful social interactions can

lead to increased feelings of depression, anxiety, and a sense of disconnection from others.

Strike a balance between enjoying alone time and engaging in social activities.

Erich Fromm (1900-) wrote, "We have developed a phobia of being alone. We prefer the most trivial and even obnoxious company, the most meaningless activities, to being alone with ourselves; we seem to be frightened at the prospect of facing ourselves."

If you notice signs of sadness, loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed, or a persistent feeling of isolation, reach out for social interaction or professional help.

Signs that your alone time may be turning into unhealthy isolation can be tricky to recognize. Look

out for indicators that might show it's time to reconnect with others or seek support.

Some of these indicators are: constantly feeling sad or anxious when alone, avoiding social interactions even when opportunities arise, a persistent sense of loneliness or disconnection, withdrawing from relationships, losing interest in activities you once enjoyed and/or a deep sense of emptiness.

There are times in our life that we just shouldn't be alone. At obvious things such as giving birth, going into surgery or getting life changing news we seem to have a loved one with us to hold our hand. The list is long of things that we go through with someone right there to carry part of the weight for us.

But what about a time when we really need someone by our side and no one is there? How do we cope? Where does the strength come from to make it through that particular crisis?

That is the topic for Chapter 2.

Chapter 2: Loneliness or Aloneness

Paul Johannes Oskar Tillich (1886-1965) wrote, "Language has created the word loneliness to express the pain of being alone, and the word solitude to express the glory of being alone".

The first step understand your loneliness is to acknowledge that what you are feeling is real and normal.

Recognize that loneliness and being alone are different. You can feel lonely in a crowd or feel content when alone.

Identify the source of your feelings. Consider if your loneliness is a result of a life change, low self-esteem, anxiety, or unhelpful thought patterns.

Sometimes you need to be alone. Not

to be lonely, but to enjoy your free time being yourself.

There's a big difference between being alone and feeling lonely. Being alone, solitary or spending time with yourself, is simply not being in the company of others, which may or may not be by choice. Loneliness, on the other hand, is an emotional feeling of being disconnected, unsupported, or isolated.

There are a lot of perks to being alone, including new opportunities for reflection, relaxation, and personal development. Appreciating the value of spending time alone can help you develop a strong sense of self and lead to increased creativity, productivity, and emotional wellbeing.

Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) wrote, "Conversation enriches the understanding, but solitude is the school of genius".

Being alone and experiencing loneliness aren't necessarily linked. Being alone refers to the physical state of not being in the presence of other people, but loneliness can occur in any situation, even if you are with others. It can bring a sense of isolation or not being understood by those around you.

When your social needs aren't being met, it can cause sadness or anxiety. Loneliness isn't about the quantity of your social interactions, but the quality and meaningfulness of those interactions.

Being alone doesn't automatically

lead to negative feelings. In fact, alone time can be a positive, enriching experience, providing an opportunity for self-reflection, relaxation, and independence, providing a chance to enjoy favourite activities without distraction, time to focus on personal growth and self-discovery and a way to unwind in peace.

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) wrote, "I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude."

Recognizing the difference between choosing to be alone and feeling lonely can help you build a healthy relationship with yourself.

However, if you do feel lonely, acknowledging these feelings can be the first step toward seeking

more meaningful connections or addressing any underlying issues.

Chapter 3. Coping with Loneliness

Outlined here are some immediate steps that you can take to alleviate feelings of loneliness.

Step 1: Acknowledge and Accept Your Feelings

Acknowledging feelings of loneliness is the first step. Recognize that loneliness is a common human experience, and it's okay to feel this way.

Don't try to suppress or deny your feelings; instead, acknowledge them and allow yourself to feel them.

Cry if you need to and if that is how you are feeling. Tears can be a way to release some of that pressure. Letting tears fall as you talk to yourself can be healing. Tell yourself that it's better to

cry than to never show any emotion at all.

Remind yourself that this is a temporary state and that you can take steps to feel better.

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Step 2. Strengthen Existing Relationships:

In 1624, John Donne coined the phrase, "No man is an island" (Meditation XVII) and it is applicable still today.

Make an effort to connect with friends and family through letter-writing, postcards, regular telephone calls, visits or social outings.

Schedule regular activities with others to nurture and strengthen existing relationships. Intentionally plan to meet up with

friends, whether for a walk, a meal, or just a chat.

Be vulnerable by opening up to people you trust about how you're feeling. This will lead, in most cases, to fostering deeper connections.

Telephone someone you can trust that can stay on the phone with you. The sound of another voice, right there in your ear, can do as good almost as much as if they are in the room with you. If they really know you, they will understand what they need to say (if anything).

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Step 3. Build and Cultivate New Connections

There is an African proverb, "Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu" (A person is a person because of other

people).

Learning to live with loneliness involves actively building new connections.

For many this is the most frightening step, however it need not be.

Don't be afraid to strike up conversations with people you encounter, like neighbours, co-workers, or people in your community.

Make small talk: Engage in brief, friendly interactions with people you see regularly, like a 'bus driver, barber or baker.

Spend time in public spaces. Simply being around other people in a low-pressure environment, such as a park or a coffee shop, can help you feel less alone.

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Step 4. Embrace Solitude and Build a Positive Relationship with Yourself:

Practice self-compassion. Treat yourself with the same kindness and understanding you would offer a friend.

Learn to enjoy your own company and appreciate the time you spend alone.

Use this time for self-reflection, personal growth, and exploring your interests and passions.

Develop a routine that incorporates activities that you find meaningful and enjoyable

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Step 5. Create a comfortable living space

Decorate your home to reflect your tastes and interests to help make alone time something to look forward to. A space that feels like a sanctuary can significantly enhance your comfort and peace of mind.

Something comforting may help. Children often have a comforting blanket or teddy bear, why can't we have something too? Hold a pillow or a blanket close and feel the warmth go through you. It can trick you into thinking someone is there.

Go to bed with an extra pillow to hug or tuck between your knees.

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Step 6. Learn to be alone without being lonely

Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) wrote, "I

think it's very healthy to spend time alone. You need to know how to be alone and not be defined by another person."

Being alone without feeling lonely involves engaging in activities that bring you joy and fulfilment, even without others around.

Talk to yourself out loud. Sure, if you did this around people they would begin to wonder about you. The fact is, no fellow human is there.. Find upbeat and positive things to say. Hearing a voice makes you feel less alone, even though it is your own.

Think about what you enjoy doing most when you're by yourself — perhaps reading, gardening, or cooking makes you feel good. It can be any activity that makes you feel happy and engaged.

Maintain a positive mindset about solitude, viewing it as an opportunity for self-care and personal growth.

Practice gratitude for the moments of peace and quiet to help shift your perspective on being alone.

Use solitude to recharge and reflect to gain valuable insights into your thoughts and feelings. Taking a nap or a small amount of sleep may give you the extra strength needed to fight aloneness.

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Step 7. Learn to enjoy your own company

Enjoying your own company can start with self-acceptance and recognizing your worth. Spend time doing activities you love and that make you feel good about yourself,

like finding a new hobby, diving into a book, or indulging in your favourite movie or music. Find joy in the things you do alone to help boost your self-esteem and independence.

Consider setting personal challenges or goals to achieve during your alone time, as this can provide a sense of accomplishment. Over time, you may find that you look forward to these moments with yourself, appreciating the freedom and peace they bring.

Richard J. Foster (1942-) wrote, "If we possess inward solitude, we will not fear being alone, for we know that we are not alone. Neither do we fear being with others, for they do not control us. In the midst of noise and confusion we are settled into a deep inner silence."

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Step 8. Balance your need for solitude with maintaining social connections.

Balancing the need for solitude with maintaining social connections involves recognizing and honouring your personal needs, while also making an effort to engage with others.

Richard J. Foster (1942-) also wrote, "Loneliness is inner emptiness. Solitude is inner fulfilment. Solitude is a state of mind and heart".

Set aside dedicated time for yourself to enjoy solitude and engage in self-reflection or personal hobbies, but also make an effort to schedule social activities, like meeting a friend for coffee, joining a club or group,

or participating in community events.

William Arthur Ward (1812-1882) wrote, "Practice the art of aloneness and you will discover the treasure of tranquillity. Develop the art of solitude and you will unearth the gift of serenity".

Striking a balance can help you enjoy the benefits of solitude, while also nurturing your relationships and connections with others.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) wrote, "Solitude makes us tougher toward ourselves and tender toward others; in both ways it improves our character".

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Step 9. Volunteer your services or skill-set by getting involved with

a cause you care about to meet like-minded people and gain a sense of purpose and belonging.

Helping others can provide purpose and connection, even when you're alone, and can be highly rewarding.

Volunteer in your community to make a positive impact while focusing on the wellbeing of others.

Volunteers are [V]alued for their service, [O]bliging no matter what. [L]onging to share with those in need. [U]nderpaid but not unappreciated. [N]ot everyone can see [T]he promises you hold [E]njoying helping others, with [E]nthusiasm untold. [R]eally special thanks for everything volunteers do [S]o many lives are blessed just because you're you.

-oOo-

Step 10. Expand Your Field

Consider joining a class or group based on your hobbies and interests to meet like-minded individuals. Engage with community groups or clubs for a sense of belonging and to meet people with similar interests. A book club, a fitness class, or a hobby group can be a chance to build new relationships.

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Step 11. Visit religious community (for example a church or synagogue). You don't have to be a believer at first to simply attend and meet new people. If the group has a belief system that you can accept they will generally welcome your involvement. By becoming involved you will gain a sense of belonging which is

counterintuitive to loneliness.

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Step 12. Explore your creativity

Alone time can bring the perfect opportunity to express yourself creatively. Writing, painting, or making music can enhance your happiness and self-discovery.

Carl Sandburg (1878-1967) wrote, "Shakespeare, Leonardo da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin, and Lincoln ... were not afraid of being lonely because they knew that was when the creative mood in them would work."

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Step 13. Engage in Self-Care and Hobbies

Take care of your physical and mental health by exercising regularly, eating well, and getting

enough sleep.

Identify activities that bring you joy and fulfilment, and make time for them regularly.

This could be anything from reading, gardening, or cooking to pursuing creative endeavours like art or music. Activities you love can enrich your life and also boost your mood and self-esteem. No matter what you're into, your hobbies can provide you with joy and a sense of accomplishment.

Prioritise activities that make you feel happy and engaged, even when you're by yourself.

Challenge negative thoughts like "I'll be lonely forever" by speaking to yourself in a more gentle and realistic way. If loneliness is accompanied by negative self-talk, work to challenge those thoughts

and practice self-compassion.

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Step 14 Learn a new skill

Using your alone time to learn something new can be incredibly rewarding. Explore a new language, a musical instrument, or a manual skill to boost your confidence and open up new possibilities. Once you master a new skill, don't be afraid to share your skills with others.

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Step 15. Connect with nature

Nature's calming effect can help reduce stress. A walk in the park, gardening, or simply sitting outside can be a wonderful way to enjoy some alone time.

Ten minutes of sunshine everyday will provide sufficient vitamin D

to boost your mood and improve your overall health.

If you can't make it outside, listening to calming nature sounds, like water falling or birdsong , can be soothing.

Uplifting music may help. Find something you like and listen to the words. Feel the music in your body. It may even feel like the heartbeat of someone else right next to you, almost like fooling you into feeling that you are not alone.

Some people find that listening to the radio helps alleviate an empty-house syndrome.

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Step 16. Enjoy a good book

Reading can transport you to another world, provide new

insights, and stimulate your imagination. Visit your local library or bookshop to discover new authors and engage with new ideas.

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Step 17. Write

Write down how you feel right now. Write whatever comes into your head. All the anger, pain, fear, and sadness from inside is now on that paper.

Take it and shred it to little pieces and then throw it away. You will feel better for throwing away those feelings.

Alternatively, write in a journal. Process your thoughts and feelings, gain clarity, and reflect on your experiences through journaling. It can help you understand yourself

better and appreciate your personal journey.

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Step 18. Set personal goals

Define what you want to achieve, whether it's related to your career, personal growth, fitness, or hobbies. Setting goals can give you a sense of purpose, making your alone time more productive and fulfilling.

A person without goals in his life is like a ship without maps and a compass. He will drift aimlessly from day to day hoping to arrive at the nebulous port of "somewhere." His voyage though life will be left to chance.

Without goals life is uninteresting and without challenge. Goals are decisions to

action. Goals are maps that give the routes to distant ports in life. Goals help a person know where he is going and how he is going to get there.

A goal is more than a dream; it is a dream being acted upon. It is more than an "Oh, I wish I could." A goal is a clear statement of "This is what I am going to do."

Goals are not fanciful doubts; they are declarations of faith.

Do you have a list of goals that you are working on at this moment? If you do, congratulations, because it places you in a small group of achievers.

If you do not have goals for your life, let me share some basic reasons why you will benefit from setting goals.

1. Goals will give your life purpose. They help you to specifically know where you are going. They provide a clear target for your life.

2. Goals will help you develop a plan of action for reaching your goals.

3. Goals are exciting because they keep you active. Work is a sure way to success and happiness.

4. Goals are biblical. The Apostle Paul said, "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:14).

5. Goals produce results. They are not just exercises in futilities.

6. Goals help keep you young and interested in life. There is hope and expectation in the future.

7. When you work on your goals you help to encourage others to do the same.

8. Good goals help you know where you are at each month. You have planned your journey in life. You have a map to check each action by.

9. When you set meaningful goals you are following the pattern of all great leaders who have gone before. Goals work.

10. Goals are essential if you are going to accomplish things in life. Whether on the job, in the home, or in the church, goals are vital to success.

11. Goals get us involved in the present. The steps to accomplishment must be taken today.

12. Goals provide a procedure for

doing things decently and in order. It eliminates the "hit-and-miss" approach to life.

13. Goals provide a framework for evaluating our progress.

14. Nothing will happen until you set some goals for your life. This is the major advantage of failure: you do not have to do anything to achieve it.

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Step 19. Adopt a pet

A pet can provide companionship and a sense of connection, with owners reporting feeling less lonely.

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Step 20 Build a fulfilling life

alone

Being comfortable in your own company and finding joy in solitude is a key part of managing loneliness.

Create a sanctuary. Make your living space a comfortable and calming environment.

Establish a routine. A daily rhythm can provide structure and a sense of predictability, which can be particularly helpful during challenging times.

Pursue hobbies and interests. Reconnect with old passions or try new things that bring you a sense of purpose and enjoyment.

This could be anything from gardening to learning a language.

Take care of your body and mind. Regular exercise, a healthy diet,

adequate sleep, and religious practices can improve your overall mood and reduce stress.

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Step 21. Plan solo adventures

Travelling alone or exploring new places locally can offer a sense of freedom and adventure. Plan a trip to discover new things about the world and yourself.

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Step 22. Limit Media Consumption

Be mindful of the time you spend watching television or reading weekly magazines and reflect on how it affects your mood.

Avoid comparing your life to others and become the best possible version of you rather that trying to be someone you are not.

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Step 23. Stay Active and Healthy

Engage in regular physical activity, such as walking, running, bicycling or swimming.

Maintain a healthy diet and get enough sleep to support your physical and mental well-being.

Exercise and healthy habits can boost your mood and energy levels, making it easier to manage loneliness. Find an exercise you enjoy to help improve your mood and reduce feelings of anxiety and depression.

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Step 24. Seek Professional Support

Explore what it means to be alone vs. lonely and when to get help for loneliness.

While loneliness is a universal human experience, chronic or persistent loneliness can affect your mental and physical health and may require you to seek professional support.

If you're struggling to cope with loneliness, consider talking to a counsellor.

They can provide support and guidance in developing healthy coping mechanisms and building stronger connections.

A counsellor can also help you identify and address any underlying issues that may be contributing to your loneliness.

Chapter 3:
Loneliness and the Christian

Loneliness is being unaware of the One who is with us everywhere.

Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) wrote, "Unlovely, nay frightful, is the solitude of the soul which is without God in the world - this chill, houseless, fatherless, aimless Cain, the man who hears only the sound of his own footsteps in God's resplendent creation."

Isaiah 43:1-5, "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 2) When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou

shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. 3) For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4) Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. 5) Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west;"

1 Peter 5:7, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

Joshua 1:5, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

Thomas À Kempis, C. 1380-1471 wrote, "Bear patiently your exile

and the dryness of your mind. The time will come when I will make you forget these painful moments and you will enjoy inward quietness. I will open the Bible for you and you will be thrilled by your new understanding of my truth."

Psalm 68:5-6 God setteth the solitary in families, "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation. 6) God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land."

1 Samuel 12:22, "For the Lord will not forsake his people for his great name's sake: because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people."

Psalm 25:16, "Turn thee unto me, and

have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted."

Joshua 1:9, "Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

Isaiah 41:10, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

Psalm 27:10, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up."

Matthew 28:20, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

About, above me, evermore God's gentle presence broods

He shares with me my silences, He fills my solitudes.

His face and form I cannot see, no spoken word can hear, but with some better sense of soul I do perceive Him near.

Are not these joys too good to last? May He not soon depart?

"No, I am with you always", He answers to my heart.

Deuteronomy 31:6, "Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

Psalm 23:4, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou

art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."

Genesis 2:18, "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."

John Milton, 1608-1674, wrote, "Loneliness is the first thing that God's eye nam'd not good."

Psalm 147:3, "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds."

John 14:18, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you."

Hebrews 13:5, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

Philippians 4:6-7, "Be careful for

nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7) And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Psalm 38:9, "Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee."

Proverbs 18:24, "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

Psalm 62:8, "Trust in him at all times; ye people, pour out your heart before him: God is a refuge for us. Selah."

1 Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful,

who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Isaiah 43:2, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

2 Timothy 4:16-18, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. 17) Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. 18) And the Lord shall deliver me from every

evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

Romans 8:38-39, "For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:31, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Isaiah 40:28-31, "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of his understanding. 29) He giveth power

to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. 30) Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: 31) But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Hebrews 13:5-6, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6) So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Matthew 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Psalm 68:6, "God setteth the solitary in families: he bringeth out those which are bound with chains: but the rebellious dwell in a dry land."

Romans 8:35-39, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36) As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38) For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39) Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Deuteronomy 31:8, "And the Lord, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed."

1 John 4:13, "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

John 16:32, "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me."

Hebrews 13:5-6, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6) So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall

do unto me."

Psalm 139:7-10, "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? 8) If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. 9) If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; 10) Even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

Matthew 27:46, "And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Psalm 73:23-26, "Nevertheless I am continually with thee: thou hast holden me by my right hand. 24) Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me

to glory. 25) Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee. 26) My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

Matthew 14:13, "When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities."

Isaiah 49:16, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me."

Isaiah 53:3, "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Isaiah 49:15, "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee."

James 4:8, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded."

Luke 5:16, "And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed."

Oswald Chambers, 1874-1917, wrote, "Alone with God! It is there that what is hid with God is made known-God's ideals, God's hopes, God's doings."

Philippians 4:19, "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

Psalm 34:18, "The Lord is nigh unto

them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit."

2 Corinthians 1:3-4, "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4) Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

Psalm 16:11, "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

2 Timothy 4:16, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge."

Galatians 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the

law of Christ."

John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

Charles R. Swindoll, 1934- wrote, "It is in lonely solitude that God delivers his best thoughts, and the mind needs to be still and quiet to receive them."

Isaiah 43:1-4, "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 2) When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall

the flame kindle upon thee. 3) For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. 4) Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life."

Joshua 1:5-6, "There shall not any man be able to stand before thee all the days of thy life: as I was with Moses, so I will be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. 6) Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I sware unto their fathers to give them."

1 Chronicles 16:11, "Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his face continually."

Matthew 6-31-34, "Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32) For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. 33) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. 34) Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

Psalm 34:17, "The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."

Psalm 46:1, "To the chief Musician for the sons of Korah, A Song upon Alamoth. God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in

trouble."

Psalm 121:1-2, "A Song of degrees. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. 2) My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth."

Carlo Carretto, 1910- , wrote, "The desert does not mean the absence of men, it means the presence of God."

Psalm 142:4, "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."

Psalm 62:5, "My soul, wait thou only upon God; for my expectation is from him."

Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19) Go ye therefore,

and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

John 16:33, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

Isaiah 58:11, "And the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought, and make fat

thy bones: and thou shalt be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not."

Revelation 1:1, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John:"

John 16:32-33, "Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. 33) These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Psalms 140:12-13, "I know that the

LORD will maintain the cause of the afflicted, and the right of the poor. 13) Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name: the upright shall dwell in thy presence."

The ancient Hebrews used Psalm 140 in times of melancholy and loneliness.

Psalm 25:16-21, "Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me; for I am desolate and afflicted. 17) The troubles of my heart are enlarged: O bring thou me out of my distresses. 18) Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my sins. 19) Consider mine enemies; for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. 20) O keep my soul, and deliver me: let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee. 21) Let integrity and uprightness preserve me; for I wait

on thee."

Psalm 91:1-2, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. 2) I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust."

Matthew 11:28-30, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. 30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Psalm 23, "A Psalm of David. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. 2) He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. 3) He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his

name's sake. 4) Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. 5) Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. 6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever."

Psalm 139:1-2, "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. 2) Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off."

2 Timothy 4:16-17, "At my first answer no man stood with me, but all men forsook me: I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge. 17) Notwithstanding the Lord stood

with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion."

1 Timothy 5:5, "Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day."

Psalm 40:1-3, "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. I waited patiently for the Lord; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. 2) He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. 3) And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the Lord."

Romans 8:39, "Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Isaiah 41:1, "Keep silence before me, O islands; and let the people renew their strength: let them come near; then let them speak: let us come near together to judgment."

1 Peter 5:6-7, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: 7) Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."

Revelation 3:20, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

John 14:16, "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you

another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever."

Matthew 14:23, "And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone."

Psalm 91:15, "He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him."

Romans 8:35, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?"

Psalm 42:11, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

John 15:13, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

Psalm 13:1, "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. How long wilt thou forget me, O Lord? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me?"

Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

John 14:15-17, "If ye love me, keep my commandments. 16) And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17) Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

John 14:1, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me."

Psalm 68:5, "A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widows, is God in his holy habitation."

Matthew 14:15, "And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals."

Mark 6:32, "And they departed into a desert place by ship privately."

Mark 8:4, "And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?"

Jeremiah 26:9, "Why hast thou

prophesied in the name of the Lord, saying, This house shall be like Shiloh, and this city shall be desolate without an inhabitant? And all the people were gathered against Jeremiah in the house of the Lord."

Isaiah 43:1, "But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine."

Psalm 94:17-18, "Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. 18) When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up."

Romans 12:5, "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."

Mark 1:35, "And in the morning,

rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."

Jeremiah 15:17, "I sat not in the assembly of the mockers, nor rejoiced; I sat alone because of thy hand: for thou hast filled me with indignation."

Psalm 73:28, "But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, that I may declare all thy works."

Philippians 2:3-4, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4) Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

Psalm 102:7, "I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top."

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